

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01
DHA-02 /061 W
-----250734Z 033269 /10

R 241455Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1931
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USNATO BRUSSELS 974
AMEMBASSY PARRIS
AMCONSUL MUNICH

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, PFOR, SHUM, CSCE, CZ
SUBJECT: REGIME BRIEFLY BREAKS SILENCE ON CHARTER 77

1. IN ITS EARLIER REPORTING ON CHARTER 77 EMBASSY HAS POINTED TO PUBLIC SILENCE OF REGIME LEADERSHIP ON THIS ISSUE. THIS SILENCE WAS BROKEN BRIEFLY JAN 21 IN A RATHER CURIOUS WAY--IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CONGRESS OF THE SMALL SOCIALIST PARTY OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA. CP GENERAL SECRETARY HUSAK RECEIVED A DELEGATION OF SOCIALIST PARTY LEADERS AND, AMONG OTHER THINGS, SAID BOTH CP AND SOCIALIST PARTY DETERMINED NOT TO ALLOW DISRUPTION OF THE PEACEFUL LIFE OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK PEOPLE. ATTACKS ON SOCIALISM ARE AS OLD AS THE DOCTRINE ITSELF, HE SAID, "BUT IT CAN HAVE NO EFFECT ON
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THE SITUATION IN THIS COUNTRY IF A PAMPHLET AGAINST SOCIALIST CZECHOSLOVAKIA IS SIGNED BY 200 OR 300 PEOPLE." HE APPARENTLY DID NOT REFER TO CHARTER 77 BY NAME.

2. CPCZ PRESIDUM MEMBER ALOIS INDRA, CONSIDERED A MEMBER OF HARDLINE FACTION, ADDRESSED THE SOCIALIST CONGRESS THE SAME DAY AND SPOKE AGAINST CHARTER 77 SUPPORTERS AT GREATER LENGTH,

BUT IN WHAT WERE FOR HIM MODERATE TONES. HE ACCUSED BOURGEOIS GOVERNMENTS OF INSPIRING THE ACTIVITIES OF DISSIDENTS, INCLUDING WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT. CALLING THE CHARTER 77 CONTENTS SHOPWORN, HE ACCUSED THE SINGERS OF NOT HAVING BEEN TOLERANT OF OPPOSITION WHEN THEY CONTROLLED CZECHOSLOVAK MEDIA IN 1968. HE ALSO ACCUSED THE CHARTER SUPPORTERS OF PRETENDING TO BE DEFENDERS OF THE LAW, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME VIOLATING THE LAW AGAINST ANTI-STATE ACTIVITY. HE WAS NOT, HOWEVER, QUOTED AS CALLING FOR PUNISHMENT FOR THEM AND CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT BEST RESPONSE TO "DISRUPTERS" IS CONCENTRATED EFFORT TO CARRY OUT CONSTRUCTIVE TALKS AND "STRENOSHEN THE MORAL-POLITICAL UNITY OF THE WHOLE SOCIETY."

3. COMMENT: SINCE THE SOCIALIST PARTY CONGRESS WAS OCCURRING AND RECEIVING MEDIA ATTENTION, REGIME PROBABLY FELT THAT THERE WAS NO WAY TO IGNORE CHARTER 77 IN STATEMENTS BY ITS LEADERS CONNECTED WITH THE CONGRESS WITHOUT GIVING INCORRECT SIGNALS TO CP ACTIVISTS. LOW KEY IN WHICH HUSAK AND INDRA, WHOSE VIEWS ARE NOT ALWAYS IDENTICAL, HANDLED ISSUE SUGGESTS THAT THE ANALYSIS REMAINS CORRECT THAT REGIME'S TACTICS FOR DEALING WITH CHARTER 77 WERE THE RESULT OF A COLLEGIAL DECISION. NO EVIDENCE HAS YET SURFACED OF ANY LEADERSHIP DIFFERENCES ON TACTICS OR TREATMENT OF DISSIDENTS.

4. THE TACTICS CONTINUE TO BE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE CHARTER SUPPORTERS ARE A SMALL ABERRATION IN CZECHOSLOVAK SOCIETY, AGAINST WHICH THE MASSES OF PEOPLE ARE SOLIDLY LINED UP. THIS WAS AGAIN DEMONSTRATED AT PRESS CONFERENCE JANUARY 24 FOR FOREIGN JOURNALISTS AT WHICH FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN GAVE OUT STANDARD LINE AND INTRODUCED SEVERAL DOZEN "REPRESENTATIVES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF ALL WALKS OF LIFE" WHO DENOUNCED CHARTER 77 AND EXPRESSED FULL SATISFACTION WITH CURRENT LEVEL OF FREEDOMS HERE.
BYRNE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL REPRESSION, COMMUNISTS, POLITICAL PARTIES, DISSIDENT FACTIONS, INTELLECTUALS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 24-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977PRAGUE00228
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: DG ALTERED
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770026-0433
Format: TEL
From: PRAGUE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770124/aaaaavba.tel
Line Count: 100
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 90192bd2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3521081
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REGIME BRIEFLY BREAKS SILENCE ON CHARTER 77
TAGS: PINT, PINS, PFOR, SHUM, CZ, CSCE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/90192bd2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009